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ABSTRACT

The current move toward decentralized curriculum work throughout the western world marks a reversal of a historical trend: the gradual shifting from local to national control. In Norway, this trend is manifested by the emergence of changing conceptions of curriculum work, curriculum administration, and the nature of curriculum guidelines as steering and controlling instruments. This paper tentatively identifies and discusses emerging new conceptions and inherent conflicts and dilemmas, focusing on three phenomena: (1) the status of certain differentiation processes linked to developing centralized curriculum work and administration (compartmentalization, segmentation, and licensing); (2) the current and changing functions of national curriculum guidelines; and (3) critical issues related to various curriculum decision-making levels. Some historical highlights of Norway's situation are also discussed, namely the origins of Norwegian administration exemplified by the first curriculum commission, the establishment of state curricular competency, and the emergence of a regional administrative system of primary schools. Several points are made concerning the effects of decentralized management on curriculum development. Curriculum guidelines illustrate a pervasive paradox as they embody both freedom and constraint of freedom, especially when assessment and quality control procedures are involved. (33 references) (MLH)

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RISE, DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM ADMINISTRATION AND CURRICULUM GUIDELINES IN NORWAY: THE NATIONAL - LOCAL DILEMMA

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INTRODUCTION [1]

The move towards decentralized curriculum work is noted throughout the western world marking a reversal of a historical trend: the gradual development from local to national control of the content of schooling. This signifies in my country the emergence of changing conceptions of curriculum work, of curriculum administration, and of the nature of curriculum guidelines as steering and controlling instruments. Embedded in the changing processes are conflicts and dilemmas linked to different realities of curriculum making (Hopmann 1990).

I take curriculum work to signify the social processes at differing levels in which curricula develop; curriculum administration the part of the work that is organized by the offical curriculum authorities including controlling procedures from one level of decision-making to another (state, regional, institutional, classroom levels) in order to implement the curriculum at classroom level (Hopmann,1988). By the nature of a curriculum guideline I imply in this specific context, its capacities as a tool of state control.

The focus of my paper is a tentative identification and discussion of these emerging changing conceptions and the inherent conflicts and dilemmas by referring to three sets of phenomena : the state of the art as to certain differentiation processes linked to the development of centralization of curriculum work and administration - the processes of compartmentalization, segmentation and licencing , the current and changing role and function of national curriculum guidelines, and to critical issues related to the curricular decision- making levels.

This, however, will require as a starting point insights into the structures, intentions and conditions the present situation has emanated from. We need to know how different realities of curriculum making evolved historically in order to understand their present impact.

Certain historical aspects will be highlighted : The spesific Norwegian situation or what we could call the Norwegian case, the origins of Norwegian curriculum administration exemplified by the first curriculum commission, by the

establishment of state curricular competency ,and by the emergence of a regional administrative system of the primary schools.[2] Linked to the last two points is the appearance of the first national "normal plans" or curriculum guidelines.

THE NORWEGIAN CASE

State involvement in educational matters relating to children arose late in Norway. The reasons why it finally did,the way this happened during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,the curricular consequences that followed were all bound up with particular religious, geographic,demiographic, national , and political circumstances which provided both the structural preconditions and the ideological climate condusive to the rise of curriculum administration.

Especially five factors influenced the fabric of the Norwegian case:

- The strong grip of the Lutheran church
- A spacious country with a scattered population
- The struggle for political and cultural independence
- Egalitarian views and democratic values
- The choice of useful knowledge instead of classical culture

In this context I can only refer to these influencing factors [3] remarking, though, that especially the four last ones were more prominent in Norway than in the other Nordic countries being linked to the national, political and economic state of affairs. To give a general impression, however, examples related to each point may be useful:

Responsibility for the establishment and maintainance of the primary or elementary schools were left to the local communities, each of which had its own commission issuing "fundas" to regulate the contents and methods of teaching . As control and supervision of the schools had been entrusted to the church, those commissions were presided over by local clergymen from 1739 until the 1880s.

The town communities, however, successfully organized their primary and secondary education. The state primary schools were

in the towns schools for the "poor" , while they in the rural areas constituted the only schooling available.

Examples of the last three factors are the merging of the Latin and science branches of state-financed secondary schools (1848), the abolishment of the Latin composition as part of the "examen artium" (1858) with the "Plan for the Teaching" or teaching program for the combined Latin and Science ("Real") Schools (1858) and the final exclusion of Latin as the last classical language of upper secondary education in 1890.It is also a fact that from the 1920s all children in Norway attended the same seven-year common school.

The development referred to would have been impossible without an active curriculum administration, which seems to have interfered with the contents of schooling on behalf of the national, economic, and democratic values alluded to. To begin with, those influences were relevant mainly to upper secondary education. They barely touched the primary level until near the end of the nineteenth century.

THE ORIGINS OF NORWEGIAN CURRICULUM ADMINISTRATION

The First Curriculum Commission - Its Curricular Significance

One of the most influential factors in the rise of curriculum administration in Norway appears to have been the so-called Danish "reform period" of 1775 - 1814 (Sirevåg, 1988). Initiated and sponsored by the Duke of Augustenborg ,Frederik Christian, ideas reflecting neo-humanism as well as philanthropy, were put forward aiming at a complete renewal of the Latin Grammar Schools. This "New Direction" as it was called offered a blueprint for educational reform, and the Regulative Decree(Reglement og Anordning) of 1799/1801 was a kind of breakthrough.

In our context , however, only its curricular significance will be discussed,* meaning its relevance as to an emerging pattern of curriculum development, curriculum administration and curriculum guidelines, and consequently paving the way for the differentiation processes of segmentation, compartmentalization

and licensing. Certain points are tentatively asserted:

1. The use of commissions was established and certain criteria for commission membership were acknowledged.

The new "direction" or reform was a result of commission work. The commission of the Duke of Augustenborg entailed the most learned and best qualified in philosophy, history, literature and education representing a variety of platforms competing for influence like realistic philantrophy, classical neo-humanism and democratic and egalitarian ideas linked to the French Revolution (Sirevåg, 1986, 1988).

An important characteristic of curriculum work has from that time om been to work through commissions representing a diversity of educational, political and ideological points of view.

A gradually emerging counter development may, however, be discerned. That is the differentiation process of "segmentation". That applies to the state administration apparatus of curriculum work segmenting the different discourse levels involved.The process is also characterized by an over time gradual exclusion of non-educational personnel from the curriculum commissions. This is made possible by letting interest groups of various types in on deliberations about the syllabus/curriculum , but leaving the final curriculum guideline or syllabus text formulation to educationalists in higher administrative positions. The process of segmentation has been documented especially by German researchers into curriculum history (Haft & Hopmann, 1989,1990; Hopmann ,1990)and also by recent Norwegian curriculum history research (Gjone 1982; Gundem, 1989)

2. Curriculum development in terms of "compartmentalization". meaning disintergration of the syllabus and the curriculum in accordance with different types and levels , and subjects of schooling.The 1801 plan was divided in three main sections: languages, sciences and arts. The process of compartmentalization was gradually accellerated by divisons into timetables, examinations, textbook regulations etc.- a development we will return to.(The difficulties impinged on efforts of providing and implementing integrated curricula may seem plausible taking into consideration the impact of this tradition).

3. A syllabus or curriculum guideline philosophy:

A revised edition of the plan , especially elaborated on the question of teaching methodology, was published in 1805. [5] Its innovative tint may be illustrated by the fact that it raises issues like a "direct" method in the teaching of Latin and student activity (cp.Sirevåg, 1988, p.17).

The 1805 Plan had a strong influence on the Regulative Decree of 1809 [6]. Especially in the first chapter about the "Intentions of Schooling" and in the fourth chapter about the "Teaching, Learning Period and Organizing of Teaching and Learning" we discern resemblances to modern curriculum guidelines.

4. A shift from selective elitism

"Scientific subjects" and modern languages were added to a syllabus formerly dominated by classical languages.

Besides,it was decided that both the students aiming for university education and students not doing so, could attend the same classes.

The two last points became very important for the development of upper secondary education in Norway - more so than in Denmark.

The Rise of a Central School Administrative Body and the Acquisition of Competency

Curriculum administration necessarily relies on a body of school authorities. After 1814 Norway was to build up its own civil service. Responsibility for public education was transferred to a state Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs and the School System. Initially this ministry's staff numbered no more than two who shared in between them the responsibility for the schools and the poor.

A significant step was taken when the ministry created the position of a secretary general for school affairs in 1856.

Apparently the acquisition of competency by the school department of the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and the School System was an important factor in consolidating and

promoting the rise of state-controlled curriculum administration.[7]

The 1858 Normal Plan for the Integrated Latin Grammar and "Real" or Science School

From 1850 onwards a series of administrative tools were developed to consolidate and advance the new type of secondary education already alluded to: the integrated Latin Grammar and Science School, like e.g. a progressive salary system , making the new school more attractive to the teachers.

It was during this period of rapid national, economic, political, social and cultural change that the aims and purposes of seondary schooling finally took shape. Old Norwegian was proposed as a school subject, science education had already been introduced, and modern languages,especially English, were soon to follow. The "national" perspective and "usefulness" were key selection criteria.Doubts were growing as to the value of Latin. Having students being taught different material depending on whether they were aiming at vocational or professional careers was increasingly considered unfair and undemocratic. The time was ripe for a national plan to normalize the organization and contents of this new kind of secondary education.

It was in a way the deciding step towards securing a national set curriculum . It may be called a "normal plan", indicating that the plan set the norm for the local schools in organizing their curriculum and teaching.[8] It was the rise of curriculum administration as far as the secondary school system was concerned.

The Emergence of a Regional Administrative System for the Primary Schools

During the 1850s and 1860s, the prevalent lack of interest on the part of the state as to primary education added to a tradition of local responsibility in launching the process of regionalization that bore immediate consequences for curriculum administration.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, most primary

schools had only one teacher who was himself responsible for his own administration. This explains why the first curricular prescriptions appeared in the form of instructions for teachers telling them what to do when teaching reading, religion and so on. It is striking that after the Education Act of 1860,the wording of those teaching plans changed only with regard to the newly introduced subjects like writing and singing. In these cases reasons for the necessity of the innovation of the new subjects are given as well.

Two factors contributed to the rise of curricular administration and to the growth of a regional network for school administration. The teachers were increasingly difficult to control but had to be familiarized with the ideas behind new school subjects or syllabus innovation. Besides,the Local Governing Act of 1837 opened up for regional and local administrative responsibility in general.

In 1855 Stavanger became the first town to have a school superintendent. Only five years later, regional school directors had assumed office in each county.

It was these regional county school directors who secured for the schools in the countryside a "normal plan" as a model for the local curricular development. In 1874, the regional school directors submitted a joint proposal for a curriculum guideline for the rural elementary schools. The local communities were intended to use these guidelines as models or norms from which to derive their own plans. Apparently this was the first time such a document for primary education was entitled "teaching plan" omitting the "instruction for the teacher" part.[9] The " Teaching Plan" was especially concerned with the reasons for and how to teach the compulsory subjects set down by the Primary Education Act of 1860 .

The Rural Education Act of 1860: Common School Education as a Means of Changing Society

Since the middle of the century,as the labour movement began to grow, demands for the state to assume additional responsibilities as to the content and organization of primary education were

reinforced by political , national and economic considerations (Dokka, 1989). The state now provided subsidies at least to the advanced primary or common school.

The idea of education for everybody as a means to equalize social, cultural and economic opportunities had entered the arena. Consequently, the Rural Education Act of 1860 [10] was the first educational act to introduce the concept of "general formation" "Allmeendannelse", implying a liberal education for all,and to relate that concept to the aims and objectives of basic advanced primary education. Corresponding curriculum improvement was sought by providing each school with a reader containing historical, geographic and science materials. Being charged with financial obligations extending beyond the secondary schools to cover the primary level as well, the state gradually relinquished its neglect of the latter's concern.

The First "Normal Plan " for Primary Education(1890)

As mentioned , it was the regional school directors who took responsibility for providing the local communities with a model plan which they could use to develop their own curricula in accordance with the Rural Education Act of 1860. The State , on the other hand, did not step in before Education Acts of 1889 were passed. In 1890, the Ministry for Church Affairs and Education published a draft plan for the common schools [11] which was meant to serve as a blueprint for the rural school authorities for the planning of the local curriculum arrangements and teaching .

This was the first "normal plan" in the history of the Norwegian primary education. It may, however, be argued that it seemed to have missed its mark, since it was not used as a framework to be adapted to local needs but adhered to in a literal sense, and also remained unchanged from its implementation around 1890 up to the 1920s (Dokka, 1989, p.99).

Those guidelines were nevertheless a milestone in Norway's history of curriculum administration. The chapters on grading, examinations, and scheduling of lessons, as well as the dual treatment of the main school subjects in terms of both stating aims and objectives and offering methodological advice,set the

standards for subsequent efforts of a similar kind.

The urban school authorities were less cared for by the Ministry. The curriculum guidelines originally developed by the regional school director, had, however,found their way into some of the bigger towns as well wherefrom improved versions were circulated to still other places. An apparently serious drawback of this development was that the inherent curriculum work dealt with only one subject at a time. The typical curriculum framework for urban schools therefore came to be made up from collected subject descriptions of various age,[12] whereas a comprehensive and updated outline of the expectations elementary education had to meet was usually wanting (Dokka, 1989, p.99)

The question of who should be responsible for curriculum work had by now become a political one. The Conservative Party advocated a more dominant role of the state in syllabus development for the elementary schools, while the Liberals were supporters of decentralization. With the Primary School Education Acts of 1936 and the appearance of the national curriculum guidelines of 1939 the centralized approach finally carried the day.

The Differentiating Process of Licensing and a Summing up Note as to Compartmentalization and Segmentation

Gradually assuming control of what should be taught and why,the state, secured national validity and overall legitimation. Embedded in this development towards a centralized state controlled school curriculum certain differentiating processes may be discerned.I have mentioned two of them: segmentation and compartmentalizaton. A third one is licensing.

The national-local dilemma existed but somehow inversed from the present situation, Full local control was the rule especially in primary education. An emerging national control gave rise to a process which is linked to compartmentalization, the process of "licencing".That is the separation of curriculum work at state level and the curriculum work teachers do at the classroom level. It is the separation of content and method. The teachers are "licenced" to implement the decisions taken at state level making them morally, but not juridically responsible for the

final realization of educational aims and objectives.

The tripartite system of "learned" schools, citizen schools, and common schools for the rural population and the urban poor engendered a processs of compartmentalization along which the syllabus was divided by subjects, classified in accordance with different types and levels of schooling, presented as part of an overall framework for school activities,and supplemented by examination rules,timetables and preliminaries dealing with structural issues until:

> ...the syllabus is reduced to a subject-orientated catalogue of goals and contents prefaced by schedules and examination regulations as well as decisions regarding school structure.
>
> (Haft and Hopmann, 1989b)

In short the pattern of today's curriculum guidelines was created. During the twentieth century ,state curriculum guidelines ceased to be mere frameworks for varying local adaptations but were implemented on a national scale instead. Not until the 1980s do we again find local or school developed curricula.

From a historical perspective, it is perhaps symptomatic that the nine-year basic common school has for some years been prescribed to reintroduce local or school-based curriculum development within a national frame of reference , whereas the state just quite recently ventured to encourage such drastic moves in respect of upper secondary education.

The era of segmentation likewise seems to have come past its zenith. At present more and stronger groups than perhaps ever before claim to have a say in matters of educational content (Aarrestad,1989). Two reports from the Confederation of Norwegian Industry and Business,CNBI, The Cost of Knowledge(1990) and Knowledge and Power (1991)have raised questions as to the use of resources and the lack of assessment and control.[13] The question is, however, if the claims will remain at a discourse level, or if non-educationalists will be let in on the decision-making as well.

In the following discussion we will return to the differentiating processes of licensing, compartmentalization and segmentation related to the different decison-levels of today's

curriculum making . But first a short "state of the art" analysis as to the function of curriculum guidelines in relation to society and a tentative retrospective look at the nature of curriculum guidelines as tools of state control.

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES : FUNCTIONS IN RELATION TO SOCIETY

In relation to society at least three functions of curriculum guidelines may be discerned: the mirroring, the informing and the steering functions.They are linked to each other and they all underline the intentional aspect of curriculum guidelines. One may argue that the steering function is superordinate to the two others.

It may be a tautology to maintain that a curriculum ought to mirror what society considers valuable, useful, appropriate and necessary related to knowledge, skills , values and norms. Nevertheless current curricular debate in my country and recent white papers witness that differing views of formation(danning), knowledge, teaching and learning as well as differing views of society and man are competing for curricular impact (NOU 1988:28;NOU 1988:34). At the same time it seems to be more important than before for the polical authorities that the political goals of schooling mirror the underlying values and norms of our democratic societies in a more comprehensible way than before. This was clearly expressed by the Swedish Minister of Education at a conference this January [14] and it is also witnessed by planned evaluation strategies in my country (Granheim and Lundgren,1990). We may conclude that patterns of decentralization maximize the importance of clearly stated political aims.

Decentralization also maximizes the informing and transmitting function of curriculum guidelines though differently from the traditional pattern which we have touched upon related to the compartmentalization process.The curriculum guidelines as we know them up till now, entail detailed information about nearly everything related to schooling as well as a mixture of underlying principles and superordinate goals and plans for the teaching content and methods of individual school subjects. According to the emerging pattern in the Nordic

countries less detailed curriculum guides will replace the existing ones informing local school athorities, school principals, teachers, parents and students/pupils about the latters' minimum human rights according to the set curriculum. The issues of priorities will be highlighted.

As a consequence of the two points already raised, the steering function of the curriculum guidelines will become accentuated, and be tried made realistic, which it probably has not been, by local- and school-based curriculum development and by evaluation strategies linked to locally initiated and implemented curriculum work. The dynamics of the steering function of the national curriculum is embedded in the locally implemented curriculum development - curriculum evaluation relationship.

Some Dimensions

Is there a lesson to learn as to the nature of the type of curriculum guidelines we have had so far and the emerging pattern? To sum up I would like to point to certain dimensions highlighting the change:

1.One dimension relates to the development from plan for the teaching and instruction for the teacher to teaching plan, and to learning plan . This dimension accentuates a development from what the teacher does to what happens in the teaching to the learning of the students/pupils. This is the pedagogical dimension. Today in my country all curriculum guidelines are called"learning plans".To give an example I quote from a curriculum document used as a model for curriculum work in the upper secondary school:

> Learning plan is used as a superordinate concept for the planning of the activities of the upper secondary school. This is to indicate that it is the learning of the pupils which should be focused.
>
> (RVO, 1989, p.1;cp.Gundem,1989a and 1990a)

2. A second dimension describes the development from fundas to plan for the school(skoleplan) to normal plan (normalplan) to

"model plan" (mønsterplan). This dimension marks the development from a locally controlled curriculum through a regional and national initated curriculum guideline as a norm for locally developed curricula towards a national model to be used without adaptation as were the "model plans" of 1971 and 1974. The centralization process came to a halt with the national curriculum guidelines of 1985 and 1987 (though still called MØnsterplan - model plan) which prescribed school-based adaptations. Today some plans developed by the municipal school authorities exist like the Oslo Plan and the Asker plans.

3. A third dimension decribes characteristica expressed like "a minimum plan" ,"a maximum plan", "a framework" and finally "a minimum rights plan"

This dimension describes the degree of obligation, commitment or liability implied. Until the curriculum guidelines of 1971 we had "minimum plans" putting down what every pupil/student was supposed to master in knowledge and skills before advancing in grades or leaving school. Since 1971 the curriculum gudelines have ben maximum plans giving a framework for schools and teachers to make their options and act within, applying both to primary, and lower and upper secondary schooling, to a different degree though. A debate on the quality of schooling has since the beginning of the eighties been going on in Norway like everywhere else. A recent White Paper (NOU 1988:28) and the evaluation of Norwegian Schooling by OECD in 1987 (OECD, 1988) highlighted the issue putting the question of the inherent curricular obligations on the agenda of school politics(Granheim and Lundgren, 1989) . The Swedish Minister of Education put it this way: "Away with poetry, bring forth responsiblity"[15] linking the concept of minimum curricular rights of the pupils to the notion of mandated responsibility given to the teachers. A Norwegian example:

Last month I was asked to address a government appointed commission preparing a national curriculum for preschool education.It may be symptomatic that the secretary phoned me up in advance telling that the Minister disfavoured the concept "framework" .

4. That leads to a fourth dimension : the scope of curriculum guidelines.Two aspects are important.The first is a gradual widening like including preschool education or kindergarten as at the moment in Norway. The second is the increasing interest of non-schooling institutions to rely on curriculum theory and models as a basis for innovation strategies. I will not, however, develop these aspects further.

DECENTRALIZATION AND CURRICULAR LEVELS OF DECISION-MAKING A TENTATIVE DISCUSSION

What is meant by curriculum differs in various contexts. There exist one may say different realities of curriculum . John Goodlad has , among others, developed a conceptual framework for helping to grasp these differing realities discerning between the field or scope of curriculum, the process domains and the different appearances of curriculum (Goodlad et al, 1979;Gundem,1990 a). The process domains entail the decision-making structure discerning between the societal level, the institutional level, the instructional level and the personal level of decision-making.

My argument is that the changing conceptions of curriculum work, curriculum administration and the role of curriculum guidelines as tools of state control are in a drastic way linked to an emerging new pattern of the structure of curricular decision-making caused by decentralization strategies and by governing by objectives. Embedded in this emerging picture we see a reversed trend or changed nature as to the processes of licensing, compartmentalization and segmentation. My approach to the discussion is my understanding of current political signals as to the general role of schooling in the Nordic countries.

I will make four points:

1. My first point is that we are today facing a completely new international and societal situation where knowledge and responsibility is the question of to be or not to be.
It suffices to mention the increasing internationalization and

the ecological situation. The demands confronting the growing generation exceed by far the ones we were facing only some decades ago. The linking of knowledge and responsibility as a curricular principle and as a pedagogical means is symptomatic.

I will not enter a discussion about the apparent need of defining what is meant by knowledge and responsiblity in this context, but I would like to look at the curricular implications of the demand for responsibility on the part of the actors and agents involved..

At the societal level on the arena of goal formulation (Lundgren, 1989) the political responsiblity is accentuated by a claim that the political messages be formulated in terms that are comprehensible and at the same time safeguarding the basic inherent values and norms of our democracies as underlying curricular principles . It is a question of communicating to other levels of curricular decision-making the essence of the political part of the curriculum guidelines in a way that transfers to them the responsibility for local or institutional-based curriculum development in accordance with the political message.

Mandated reponsibility is transmitted to the regional and local school authorities implying economic as well as juridical and moral responsibilities. The national-local and political-professional conflicts and dilemmas engendered are momentous especially since the dynamics of the reform rest on the interplay of school-based curriculum development and local evaluation of implementation.

The ultimate responsibility consequently rests with the schools and the teachers. The schools are , as it were, entrusted with implementing mandated change(ven der Vegt and Knip,1990). The traditional non-obligating licens[illegible] of the teachers is being replaced by collective obligations and responsibilities being maintained and controlled by national and local school authorities. It is a question of general debate if this adds to the development of teachers as professionals or not (Skilbech,1990).

2. My second point relates to the difficulties of political governance and control generally and in matters of schooling

especially (Lindensjö and Lundgren,1987). We all know the realities of top-bottom curriculum reform. Governing by objectives is now to replace governance and control by rules and regulations- making the institutional or school level the arena for curriculum decisions. Certain conflicts and dilemnas are inherent:

One question may be asked concerning to what extent the schools frame their own agenda or adopt it from the policies of external agencies. The way we are experiencing School- Based Curriculum Development, SCCD, is in my country still a top - bottom strategy treating the school curriculum in strategic terms seeking as Malcomb Skilbech expresses it:

> ...to reconstructure or firmly steer their economies.This reflects both the public concern with the outcomes of schooling and a rekindled interest in human capital theory."
>
> (Skilbech,1990, p.76

Another question relates to what is understood by "local". We have in my country already experienced local curriculum development strategies based on misunderstandings. We have got the "Oslo plan" as well as the "Asker plans"- "local" being interpreted as municipal school authorities contrary to the explicit statements of the Ministry focusing the school.

Then there is the question about the realism of the Ministry's intentions regarding SBCD. Maurice Holt(1987) referring to a research study on School-Based Curriculum Development, SBCD, asks in a thought provoking article : "Are schools capable of making critical decisions about their curriculum?" School-based curriculum development is an important move from a notion of curriculum which , as Bill Reid expresses it:

> ...sees it as embodying choices made through formalized, hierarchial structures, to one which understands it as the outcome of less formal , communal deliberation on wants, resources and possibilities.(Reid, 1987a, p.116)

We must , however , be aware the fact that probably SBCD

> implies that schools and teachers need to have resources and abilities for decision-making over and above those that they customarily employ. (Reid, 187b, p.110)

The teachers are used to and good at decision-making at classroom level. Research has informed us that decisons which ought to be taken at the institutional level mostly are taken at the instructional level(Griffin, 1979).Will teachers manage the shift? It has to do not only with capabilities and skills but with attitudes ,motivation and values,as well as with resources, organisation and management(Skilbech, 1984)

It has been said that SBCD should be fostered rather than implemented (Reid,1987a) indicating that a climate for SBCD should exist in the school before the introduction of the strategy, and that SBCD implies curriculum deliberation practices more than technical strategies for curriculum development.

3. My third point also relates to the question of a dwindling state governance - but now seen in relation to the notion of curricular constituencies - the relationship between the curriculum and interests of the general public seeking to influence the curriculum . Segmentation has been one way of handling the pressure from external interest groups. Today segmentation won't suffice. A pluralistic and corporative society like the ones of modern democracies demand deciding influence on the content of schooling out of varying ideological, economic,religious or cultural interests. This is difficult to handle on a national level. The question is if it will work on a local societal level.Ideally, local curriculum development can

> be a means to rediscovering the common grounds for curriculum which have been lost in the tug between sectionalism, individualism,and central bureaucracies.
> (Reid, 1987b, p.123)

But as also Reids points to : the ambition of the undertaking has to be acknowledged.And to add: especially the dilemmas and

conflicts inherent in a working local partnership of politicians, parents and professionals.

4. My fourth point has to do with the demand for a more flexible school system. An underlying motive is that the schools should be more able than in the past to adapt to the changing needs and demands nationally and internationally, and to be capable of rapid change when research and evaluation uncover discrepancies as to stated goals and objectives, and implementation.

Signals indicate that the efforts towards a more flexible school may encompass a development towards a more unified school system - working counter the prevalent process of compartmentalization.A new national curriculum guideline in Sweden will entail the whole school system from kindergarten to upper secondary schools.Schools for 4 to 16 years old are being tried out in Holland(van der Vegt and Knip, 1990).A critical question is :who will pay the cost? The Danish Minister of Education maintains that the basic common school must adjust its teaching to the demands of upper secondary education.[16] Fourteen sector/school type overlapping committees of educational advisers have been set up to secure that pupils/students experience continuity and avoid overlap and gaps when moving from one level to another (Holgersen,1991).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In a recent overview of trends of curriculum reform Malcomb Skilbeck (1990) not unexpectedly pinpoints two procedures governments in the OECD region are finding effective for developing curricula at all stages:the assessment and examination systems, and the use of comprehensive guidelines. He maintains that curriculum guidelines are at one and the same time a form of direction by goverment and an invitation to exercise more responsibility arguing that:

> Curriculum guidelines illustrate a pervasive paradox in curriculum reform. Freedom is,in a sense, being enjoyed . At the same time it is being constrained or at least highly

structured by ....assessment procedures...

(Skilbech, 1990, p.74)

It is fair to say that the trends recognized by Skilbech are maximized by curricular decentralization strategies.Assessment and quality control procedures seem to be the next step leading to a curriculum reality where curricular decentralization through evaluation strategies takes the meaning of curricular centralization.

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Notes

1. The present paper is an outcome of the research project Curriculum and School Subject:The Content of Schooling - Intended, Operationalized, Realized and Seen in an Administrative and Structural Context - from a Historical and Contemporary Perspective.

The project is supported from 1989-1992 by the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities through its Program for Research in Education.The study "Curriculum Administration in a Historical and Contemporary Perspective" is a subproject.

2.For a broader discussion see Gundem B.B., Aspects of the Rise of Curriculum Administration in Norway in Haft/Hopmann (eds.), Case Studies in Curriculum Administration History, Falmer Press, 1990 , pp. 31-45

3. For a broader discussion , see Gundem , 1990.

4.For a discussion of the educational proposals, see Gundem, 1990, pp.37-39

5.Underviisningsplan for Cathedralskolerne i Kiøbenhavn, Christiania og Odense, efter Hs. Kongelige Majestæts Befaling,affatet og undertegnet 24. April 1805 af Commissionen for Universitetet og de lærede Skoler ved Frederic Christian, Nic.Edinger Balle,D.G. Moldenhaver,Kierulf, K.L.Rahbæk. (Trykt hos Directeur Johan Frederik Schulz. Kongelig og Universitetsbogtrykker)

6.Forordning, angaaende de lærde Skoler i Danmark og Norge. København, den 7de November 1809. Trykt hos Directeur Johan Frederik Schulz, Kongelig og Universitets-bogtrykker.

7. For a broader discussion, see Gundem 1990, pp.37-41.

8.The expression "normal plan" may be influenced by the appearance of the first Preussian "Normalplan für Gymnasien" from 1816. Especially Hartvig Nissen who served as a fulltime councillor from 1852 to 1854 and who became the Secretary General for School Affairs from 1865 had made several "study tours" to get acquainted with the school systems of other countries.

9.See e.g. Undervisningsplan for den lavere Almueskole paa Landet i Kristiania Stift Kristiania Stiftsdirektion, Juni 1877

10. Lov om Almueskolevæsenet paa Landet. Stockholms Slot den 16de Mai 1860 Christiania Trykt hos Chr. Grøndahl

11. Udkast til skoleplaner for folkeskolerne , udgivet af kirke- og undervisningsdepartementet, Kristiania:P.T.Mallings boghandels forlag, 1890

12.A typical syllabus plan of this kind is Skoleplan for Kristiania folkeskoler,Kristiania 1906 It is a compilation of all kinds of school regulations and detailed syllabus descriptions of all possible subjects dating from 1892 till 1914

13. Min oversetting
Næringslivets hovedorganisasjon ,NHO, Kunnskapens pris. Hovedtrekk ved ressursbruken i det offentlige utdanningssystemet på åttitallet NHO-Seksjon Kompetanse September 1990

Næringslivets hovedorganisasjon ,NHO, Kunnskap og makt NHO-Seksjon Kompetanse ,Mars 1991

14. En decentraliserad skola i utveckling, (A decentralized school in development) Karlstad 9-10 January 1991

15. Bort med poesien, inn med ansvarligheten(my translation) cp.note 13

16. Interview in Weekend-Avisen,February 1989. Qouted from Holger Henriksen, The Cultural Debate and the Development of Curricula. Paper Nordic Society for Educational Research, NFPF, Annual Meeting,Copenhagen March 7-10,1991